

# STATEMENT

**PROTECT OUR ECONOMY**



For Immediate Release

Ottawa, ON - Prime Minister Stephen Harper released the following open letter to Canada's public service:

Since coming to office, our Conservative government has made life more affordable for Canadian families and protected Canada's fragile economy in the midst of the most severe global recession in a generation. We have worked to lower taxes on individuals and job-creating businesses, increase Canada's economic opportunities around the world through new trade agreements, and protect Canadians here at home and from threats abroad.

We have accomplished all of this because of our partnership with, and the hard work, dedication and integrity of you: Canada's public servants. Canadians are well-served by our world-class public service, and I have seen this first-hand as Prime Minister. During our time in Government, we have worked with you to ensure your efforts are focused on the things that matter most to Canadians, and to create a healthier workplace where good work is recognized, red tape is removed, and benefits meet real needs.

Unfortunately, in the current election context, misleading statements are being made about certain issues that matter to you and your families, including sick leave and pension entitlements.

I want to give you the facts to correct this misinformation.

## **Sick Leave**

A new round of collective bargaining between the Government of Canada and federal public service bargaining agents began in 2014 to renew the Government's collective agreements. The Government's overarching goal in these negotiations is to reach agreements that are fair and reasonable for both employees and taxpayers.

The Government's priority in the current benefit negotiations is to ensure public servants have a disability and sick leave program that is modern, comprehensive and actually meets your needs. The current, antiquated sick leave system is failing everyone. Here are the facts:

- Over 60 per cent of public servants do not have enough banked sick leave to cover a full period of short-term disability (13 weeks).
- 25 per cent of employees have fewer than 10 days of banked sick leave.
- Many employees, especially new and younger employees, have no banked sick days at all.
- In contrast, a select few long-tenured individuals, including many executives, have far more banked sick days than they will ever reasonably need.

The current sick leave system leaves gaps. The Government wants to fill those gaps so that, if you get sick, you have seamless support. Canadians are best served by a healthy and productive public service.

# STATEMENT



You want a healthy workplace and peace of mind knowing that, if you face a serious illness, you will have the support you need. Our Conservative government wants the same.

Some of you have accumulated sick days, but are being told that these will all disappear as though you are starting your career in the public service all over again. This is not true and has never been true. These days will be assigned an extra value under the new system, and will be available to those who need them. Discussions are ongoing about how best to integrate banked sick days into any new plan.

## Pensions

Recently, some public sector union executives have alleged that the Government wants to take away your pension, in whole or in part. This is false.

In 2012, we moved to modernize and secure the public service pension plan by ensuring employees and taxpayers both pay a fair share towards pension contributions for public servants. Since 2012, the Government has not proposed any other changes to the public service pension plan nor are any contemplated. We will not be moving away from the current defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan, target benefit plan, or any other shared-risk model. The public service pension plan is solid and fully-funded, and there is no need to make any such changes. These are the facts.

Our Conservative government has been proud of the good work done by Canada's public servants as we navigated the global economic recession, cut taxes on families and job-creating businesses, and balanced the budget. Like other families across Canada, we know our public servants want Canada's economy to grow and thrive, despite the continued economic turmoil we see around the world. We have protected Canada's fragile economy, and our positive low-tax plan for the next four years will do even more, with your help, to make our country strong and prosperous.

Sincerely,

Rt. Hon. Stephen J. Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Leader, Conservative Party of Canada

-30-

For media, please contact:  
Conservative Party National Campaign  
(613) 755 - 2035